

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 166338
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:NEA:WRCRAWFORD

APPROVED BY:NEA:WRCRAWFORD

S/S-O:TMARTIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 166338

NODIS

FOL JIDDA 4823 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON SANA
JUNE 28, 1978 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T JIDDA 4823

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SA, YE, YS

SUBJECT: WHAT NEXT FROM THE YEMENS? SOME POSSIBLE PROBLEMS
FOR USG

REF: (A) JIDDA 4704 (B) JIDDA 4770

1. SUMMARY: INDICATIONS OF GROWING SAG CONCERN AND POSSIBLE
ACTIONS BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PDRY MAY POSE DIFFICULT
POLICY QUESTIONS FOR USG. END SUMMARY.

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2. WE SENSE INCREASING CONCERN AND TENSION WITHIN SAG BE-
CAUSE OF RECENT EVENTS IN NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN. THE SAUDIS
OBVIOUSLY FEEL THAT THE ASSASSINATION OF GHASHMI AND THE
EXECUTION OF RUBAI ALI ARE A PART OF AN
OVERALL SOVIET-INSPIRED PLAN ULTIMATELY DIRECTED AT THEM.
THEY SEEM CONVENCED THAT ANOTHER SHOE WILL DROP AND MAY WELL
BE MAKING PLANS TO HEAD OFF THE NEXT STEP OR COUNTER IT WITH

SPEED AND FORCE.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE INDICATORS:

(1) A CONTINUING FULL STATUS ALERT OF ALL ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO INSTRUCTORS IN THE VARIOUS SERVICE SCHOOLS AS WELL AS KEEPING PILOTS ON FLIGHT LINE ALERT;

(2) ACTIVITIES OF PRINCE TURKI AL FAISAL. HE IS CONTINUING TO EMERGE AS A KEY PERSON IN SAG WITH RESPONSIBILITIES EXCEEDING HIS DUTIES AS CHIEF OF GENERAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE. HE WAS THE KING'S SPOKESMAN TO AMBASSADORS AND INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS ON 25 JUNE (REFTEL A), HOWEVER, FONMIN SAUD WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY AT THE TIME WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE VISITED THE FOLLOWING CAPITOLS:

CAIRO, DAMASCUS, AMMAN. HE IS CURRENTLY IN BAGHDAD AND EXPECTED TO GO TO KHARTOUM TOMMORROW. HE SPOKE TO US AS KING'S REPRESENTATIVE AND UNDOUBTEDLY IS PLAYING SAME ROLE IN HIS TRAVELS.

INTELLIGENCE REPORTS LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS SOUNDING OUT SENTIMENT AND POSSIBLY SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR EFFORT TO COUNTER ANY PDRY INITIATIVES. HE MAY ALSO BE ASSESSING WHAT SUPPORT MAY BE PRESENT FOR INITIATIVES AGAINST PDRY BEFORE NEXT SHOE DROPS. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IS VISIT TO BAGHDAD AS IRAQI ABSTENTION FROM ANY
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ARAB-DIRECTED ACTION AGAINST PDRY WOULD PROBABLY BE CRUCIAL.

(3) IN ADDITION, SAG HAS BEEN IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH IRAN; AMBASSADOR TO IRAN WAS FIRST FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET WITH PRINCE TURKI ON 25 JUNE; ON 26 JUNE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED TO RIYADH FOR MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN; WE THINK SAUDIS WOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST PDRY WITHOUT FULL BACKING OF IRANIANS.

3. ANY ACTION IN YEMENS, WHETHER PRECIPITATED BY PDRY OR OTHERWISE, WILL PROBABLY SPARK SUBSTANTIAL SAUDI PARTICIPATION EITHER OPENLY OR COVERTLY, WITH RESULTING QUESTIONS FOR USG SUCH AS:

(1) TO WHAT EXTENT WILL WE PERMIT FMS EQUIPMENT FURNISHED SAUDIS TO BE TRANSFERRED OR USED AGAINST PDRY;

(2) IN THE EVENT OF SAUDI MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, CAN OR SHOULD BE PLAYED BY U.S. MILITARY ADVISORS AND U.S. CONTRACTORS WHO SUPPORT SAG FORCES;

(3) SAUDIS HAVE ALREADY INDICATED (REFTELS) THAT
THEY EXPECT SOLID U.S. SUPPORT AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RE-
QUEST SAME FOR OVERT OR COVERT ACTIONS AGAINST YAR. CON-
SIDERING STRONG SOVIET PRESENCE IN PDRY, WE DOUBT SAUDIS
WOULD PARTICIPATE IN DIRECT ACTIVITIES AGAINST PDRY WITH-
OUT U.S. SUPPORT. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TELL THEM.
WEST UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, ASSASSINATION, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, CAT-B, POLITICAL SITUATION, EXECUTIONS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE166338
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:WRCRAWFORD
Enclosure: REPEAT JIDDA 4823
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N780005-0697
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978062/aaaaaboh.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 470cee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 JIDDA 4704, 78 JIDDA 4770
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 24 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2207355
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WHAT NEXT FROM THE YEMENS? SOME POSSIBLE PROBLEMS FOR USG
TAGS: PEPR, SA, YE, YS
To: SANA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/470cee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014